



# SATURDAY STAR

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Saturday February 19 2022

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## EDUCATION

# OVERCROWDING CRISIS HIGHLIGHTS EDUCATION WOES

80 children crammed into one Grade 1 classroom

ANNA MURPHY  
Johannesburg

**IN A STATE** characterised by South Africa's education crisis, Graham City James Primary School is a microcosm of the challenges facing the nation's schools. An astonishing 80 children are crammed into a single Grade 1 classroom, a situation that has caused grave concerns about the quality of education that young learners receive.

An outbreak of anger with the overwhelming task of providing meaningful education in such cramped conditions has caused the school's teachers to go on strike.

The striking situation arises against the backdrop of Premier Cyril Ramaphosa's latest efforts to improve the education system, including the need for expanded access to early childhood development and a commitment to building more schools.

However, at James Primary School and across the country, the urgent question remains: Will these promises translate into real change for South Africa's children?

When the Sunday school opened the school earlier this week, we counted around 80 children in the classroom. As more arrived, a teacher knew that the 42 reported by the DA following an oversight visit the day before.

The classroom was overcrowded, with learners kept outside to wait for space. Parents gathered outside the school, sharing their frustration that the school had been typical of others in the area over the last few years.

From a shortage of teachers, many learners do not have desks, and some teachers have no textbooks. These factors at James Primary School.

Several parents also expressed their concern over the ongoing education challenges, reporting that many of their children are still unemployed.

Kalaga Legole stated her concern for her 10-year-old son, who is still in the same Grade 1 classroom, as it is not safe for him to be in the classroom.

"I signed his name for the first time when he started school. I thought he was a good boy. But now I am not giving him any more money to go to school."

Johnnie Kere, another parent, expressed his frustration regarding the overcrowding at the school. "I don't want my child to go to school. I don't want my child to go to school. I don't want my child to go to school."

Meanwhile, the DA, after months of

bringing oversight to Graham City, is pushing for more schools to be built to ease the overcrowding.

The party is calling for immediate action, including the allocation of funds to build more schools and to provide textbooks to learners.

It is not clear if the DA has any concrete plans to address the overcrowding crisis at James Primary School.

Responding to the parents' grievances, Graham City's Deputy Mayor, Mphahlele, acknowledged the overcrowding crisis, stating, "We are not alone in this."

He said that the DA is working to build more schools and to provide textbooks to learners. He also said that the DA is working to improve the quality of education in Graham City.

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## URC DAILY

### Bulls ready to silence Stormers home crowd

REPORTER'S REPORT

**AS** South Africa's Super Rugby Union season gets underway, the Bulls are looking to take on the Stormers in the highly anticipated Union Rugby Championship (URC) derby at the end of the season.

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## NO SUPPORT

### Dricus not a fan-favourite Down Under

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**STUDY A**

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**STUDY A**

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been focused  
our designs  
the line we  
other types  
separate into  
a key role

no noisemakers in the Eastern Cape, while  
his childhood friends, Rankwana and  
Lebura, continue to live in Johannesburg.  
Despite the distance, the three have  
remained closely connected, working  
together to bring Kotto Khalo to life.  
Mkonto said: "After we knew

they've set a little deadline: by the  
end of the year, the business needs to  
show signs of success, or I might have  
to go 'find a real job'!" It's all in good  
fun, though, and only fuels Mkonto's  
determination to make Kotto Khalo  
a success.

now and your  
toes show

SMILING at someone at the traffic  
lights or saying please and thank you  
should be easy and should come as  
natural as breathing and here in our  
country we do it pretty often and  
way more than they do it in most  
other parts of the world. Good job us.  
Kindness, compassion and these little  
gestures go such a long way.

Today I wanna tell you about  
angels that fly among us with invis-  
ible wings and superheroes who don't  
wear capes (but totally should). If I did  
five percent of what these blessings do  
everyday I'd be wearing a cape adorned  
with glitter and all the sparkles. Let's  
talk about CHOC Childhood Cancer  
Foundation especially because Flip  
Flopp Day is just around the corner.

In 1977 Sister Sadie Cutland and  
her husband Julian's firstborn, Hillary  
was diagnosed with aplastic anaemia  
at the age of just seven years old.

A few years later Sadie decided to  
form a support group composed of  
parents and volunteers and CHOC was  
formed in 1979 in Joburg. Thanks to  
the Cutlands, the volunteers, parents  
and all the supporters along the way  
CHOC now supports over 1500 fami-  
lies at any given time.

This foundation offers emotional  
support to families, accommodation  
for out-patients and their parents,  
transport to and from treatment cen-  
tres, financial bereavement support,  
meals, care bags and so much more.  
More importantly than all of the life  
changing things I've already just men-  
tioned they provide love, kindness,  
cuddles and a whole lot of hope.

Hope changes everything. That and  
knowing you're not alone. I have been  
lucky enough to attend so many of the  
launches and events throughout the  
years and I've even cycled amongst  
those crazy Cows to raise much needed  
funds to keep it all going.

The crazy CHOC Cows wear their  
outfits with pride and they deserve  
a gigantic round of applause for the  
antics they get up to. The CHOC staff  
should wear neon capes day and night  
so that we know who they are at all  
times so we can give them high fives,  
hugs and all the love.

Thank you to every single charity  
worker and caregiver out there for  
spreading love so unconditionally.

Let Flippie be your Valentine this  
Friday the 14th. He could even be your  
"solemate". All it's gonna cost you is  
R10 so buy your sticker online or at  
any Takkie Town outlet and show off  
your toesies and be solely committed!  
Have a heart... Wear a sole! More info  
at [choc.org.za](http://choc.org.za) or [Flipfloppday@choc.org.za](mailto:Flipfloppday@choc.org.za)

#### Top 5A Tunes Of The Week

Charlie Finch: Daydreams  
Annabelle: Oh Rain  
Carmen Rodriguez: Stay Ready  
Albino Beach: Circa  
Tyja: Push To Start

#### PAGEANTRY

## Young model embraces pageantry as a platform for change

ANITA NKONKO  
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LUYANDA Mthembu, a young and  
ambitious model, shares her inspi-  
ring journey in pageantry and her  
commitment to uplifting children  
from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Mthembu has secured her place  
as a finalist in Miss Grand South  
Africa 2025, and as she prepares  
for the much-anticipated coronation  
night on June 28 at Emperors  
Palace, her focus is firmly set on  
advocacy, empowerment, and com-  
munity upliftment.

In a conversation with Saturday  
Star, the 25-year-old shared her fer-  
vent passion for pageantry and the  
deeper mission behind it, which  
she says extends far beyond merely  
securing a title.

"My journey has been one of  
resilience, passion, and a deep com-  
mitment to uplifting others—espe-  
cially the next generation," she said.

Mthembu captured her journey into pageantry from the tender age  
of 11. Inspired initially by the reality show *Torridless & Taras*, her interest  
blossomed as she discovered the inspiring narratives portrayed in contests  
like Miss South Africa.

A pivotal moment came during Rolene Strauss's iconic Top 5 interview,  
where the former Miss South Africa emphasised becoming a beacon of  
hope, a sentiment that sparked Mthembu's ambition to pursue pageantry.

"I knew then that this was something I wanted to pursue one day," she  
recounted, reflecting on the profound impact of Strauss's words.

Her passion further intensified upon meeting Ntandoyenkosi Kunene,  
Miss South Africa 2016, who visited Mthembu's high school, sharing her  
tale and encouraging young girls to chase their dreams.

"Meeting her in person confirmed so much for me about the kind of  
impact I want to have on others one day. Until that moment, pageantry had  
felt out of reach, but suddenly, it felt possible. Even though I was hesitant  
to take the leap, my mom, my biggest supporter—entered me, knowing  
how much this dream meant to me. Now that I'm here, I'm embracing  
every part of the journey with excitement and determination, ready to  
grow through this incredible experience," she noted.

Her advocacy focuses primarily on protecting and uplifting children  
from displaced and disadvantaged backgrounds.

"I am passionate about ensuring these children have access to the  
resources, education, and opportunities they need to thrive," she explained.  
Mthembu says aims to make a positive impact through community  
outreach, mentorship, and raising awareness.

"It's about giving them the support and hope they need to succeed and  
break free from the cycles of hardship they may face," she added.

Reflecting on her path to success, Mthembu attributes much of her  
progress to her unwavering support system.

"I would attribute my success to my parents, who have always been  
my biggest supporters, and to the teachers and mentors who've guided me  
along the way," she expressed.



LUYANDA Mthembu is not just a hopeful  
contender in pageantry; she is a beacon  
of inspiration and change for many. I  
Supplied